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tridges, bearing what is called a "steel" point, are considered superior to soft point shells. The former are said to kill quicker and this especially recommends them for use against an animal like the grizzly bear. "Go right clean through," Nitla said, explaining the force of the steel tipped cartridge. A soft point shell, on the other hand, may be stopped if it strikes bone. It is understood that the point of the cartridge must be neither too long nor too heavy, else it will lose in distance, dropping low. Beyond this there is no interest in ballistics. 411 813

Constant watchfulness is exercised in the handling of guns. A loaded gun will never be used to test ice or as a walking stick nor are .22's kept around camp with a loaded chamber. Fourteen year old Donald Suza expressed disapproval of the ethnographer keeping a loaded .22 in the cabin. "What for you load gun?" he demanded. Asked if this was not good sense, he replied: "Yeah, no good." 411

Most young men are capable of making repairs on a gun, such as adjusting the sights or sawing down the barrel and constructing new sights. Testing the firing power, range, and trajectory of rifles is one of the reasons for target practice. Much of this firing, however, is not designed to test the weapon but rather the shooter's marksmanship. Target practice is never seriously competitive. Girls were not observed to use guns for this purpose in camp. According to Old Man, however, girls are apt to target shoot when in the bush. Older men tend to condemn this shooting as wasteful. Old Man mildly scolded Donald Suza for target practice. "What you want to shoot water for? You can't eat water." But both Old Man and Old Kean admitted to target shooting in their youth. 411 524

Tools. Certain essential tools are found in every household. Women's tools include scissors, needles, thimbles, and steel awls. A married woman generally owns her own ax, butcher knife, file, and tanning tools. The latter include a metal scraper, used to remove hair from moosehide, and a skin softener. Scrapers are manufactured by men from discarded files. The handle of the file is removed and the metal pounded flat on both ends. The flaring ends are then bent in opposite directions and sharpened. The center of the tool is wrapped in cloth or moosehide to provide a grip. The skin softener is prepared from a piece of green wood eighteen inches long and about three inches in diameter. The surface is rounded and smoothed along most of the stick. One end is split and a thin stone, about three inches long and chipped to a thin edge on one side, is inserted. This end is then bound tight with a strip of canvas or moosehide and lashed with cord. Men's tools include the long handled ax, knife, hammer, awl, T-square, drill, plane, and file. 412 413 281

Each sex keeps its own tools in repair and cutting tools like the ax, knife, and scissors are always found well sharpened. Sharpening is done with a six or eight inch file, care being taken to always sharpen blades on axes in such a manner as to avoid a ridge and secure a gently tapering thinness which will assure a deep cut and prevent dangerous glancing. Certain tools are found in almost every winter settlement and may be used by both sexes or by more than one family: the one man crosscut, whip, and Swedish type buck saws, shovel, rake, pick, and mattock. Ownership of a carpenter's rule or measuring tape was not observed. Men sometimes make measuring sticks out of a straight length of willow. This is axed off sharply at one end and laid against the object to be measured, the sharply cut end against one end of the object. At the opposite end of the object the stick is notched and again sharply cut off. The size of the pole now corresponds to the object measured and is 412 413 804

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804 light enough to carry wherever an article of corresponding size is to be manufactured. An object to be fabricated in dimensions to match another article may also be compared to the latter by means of a length of string in which a knot is tied at the required length. Thus in the construction of a coffin, the length and width of the deceased were observed to be taken with a piece of string. The height of the reclining body, however, was ignored, hence the coffin was made too low.

412 Wedges for splitting wood are manufactured as required. They are cut from the lower
401 portion of a black spruce sapling and sharpened with an ax to a long tapering blade. Chips of wood are used as wedges in whip sawing. The back of a long handled ax head is used as a maul.

415 The implements associated with most cabins are a broom, funnel, and a dustpan cut from
322 a five gallon oil can. One family used an eagle wing as a whisk broom. When cooking is done on open fires, the tea stick is an indispensable piece of household equipment. It consists of a green willow pole, five or six feet long and an inch or more in its greatest diameter. The heavier section of the pole is sharpened and thrust into the ground at a forty-five degree angle to the fire. The upper section of the pole is notched for the handle of the kettle. The pole may be turned aside from the fire in removing the vessel. In a few days, when the ground becomes too soft to support the pole, a rock may be placed on top of the buried portion of the wood and another stone thrust into the apex made by the pole as it leaves the ground. Tea poles are discarded when they become dry or charred. When meat is roasted in front of open fires smaller poles, about three feet high are cut, and thrust into the ground almost vertically, the meat being hung on a sharpened point.

417 A considerable amount of apparatus is manufactured. In front of each cabin is found
322 a sawhorse for sawing wood. This consists of a bedlog about six inches in diameter and five or six feet long. Close to each end two spruce saplings, about four feet long and an inch and a half in diameter, are driven into the ground so that they cross each other at about a thirty degree angle. The wood to be sawed is placed in these angles. The bedlog is sometimes also used in splitting sawed lengths of wood. In the bush near the settlement are one or more saw pits. Ladders are made to reach caches. The rungs are either set in holes or nailed to side pieces. At either end of the ladder braces are nailed to the side pieces of lumber. For carpentering, a felled tree is levelled with an ax and raised on two stumps to serve as a workbench. Another piece of apparatus is used for bending green lumber in the manufacture of toboggans and sleds (Fig. 3, F, and Pl. 6, A). About six feet long, this consists of the lower trunk and part of the root of a spruce tree. Unnecessary portions of the root and trunk are trimmed away so that the wood exhibits a natural curve which is hewed and planed on its upper surface. Two poles, about two inches in diameter, are nailed to either side of the trunk. Where they project a few inches in front of the root, a crosspiece about eighteen inches long is lashed. The space between the root and crosspiece holds the lumber inserted for bending.

224 Traps, which are an important category of capital goods, are generally purchased, but
[432] a few men still build deadfalls or set two or three snares for wolf and coyote. A trapper generally owns from thirty to fifty steel traps of various sizes some of which are given to

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scribe the progress of a boat in rough water, the hand dips up and down as the arm is slowly moved from one side of the speaker's body to the other. Shooting of a gun is illustrated by holding the left hand close to the speaker's face, the fingers close together touching the thumb. The other arm is outstretched, the fingers held in the same position and directly in line with the left hand. When the speaker mentions the gun being fired, he spreads out the fingers of both hands in a quick, flaring, movement.

An obscene sign frequently demonstrated by boys and sometimes by girls is made by clenching the first with the thumb inserted under the index finger. This signifies coitus. In dancing hand pressing is often used as an erotic overture. A number of conventionalized gestures are used in the gambling game, including the indication of number by raising the corresponding number of fingers. Other signs include shaking the head up or down in affirmation or from side to side to express negation. The arms are used to express size. The left arm is stretched out, palm sideways, and size indicated with the right hand being placed at a right angle to the appropriate point. The point where the index finger joins the palm is marked off to indicate small size; the inside of the elbow or close to the shoulder are points marked off to show larger dimensions. To indicate height, the arm is outstretched palm sideways, the thumb slightly raised and the fingers close together. Height is indicated by the lowest portion of the hand. Nudging may sometimes be used for communication as, for example, to demand silence.

Aboriginally the Kaska possessed no writing. The syllabaries introduced somewhere in the Athapaskan area by Catholic and Protestant missionaries were not developed in the Cassiar. Traders took the pains to teach a few individuals to read and write simple words, but only a score or so Indian men are literate and less than half a dozen women. Today most children of from seven to fifteen receive a few weeks of instruction in writing and reading each summer in the Catholic mission school. Adults set a high value on literacy and many parents express the desire that their children master these abilities so that they will be able to write simple messages to the traders, read bills, and otherwise help the older generation adjust to modern conditions. Young children do not often share these attitudes, but some young men, like Nitla, spend several hours a week laboriously trying to learn to write words and coherent sentences. Several times Nitla asked the ethnographer for lists of familiar words such as the terms for commodities, local place names, and stock phrases ("I am going hunting.") which he could copy when the need arose.

Simple journals, often little more than calendars marking off the passage of the days and months, are kept by several young men. They contain brief notations of outstanding events (arrival of visitors, hunting data, departure from the trading post, etc.). Sometimes the writer forgets to enter a day in his journal and then his calendar is awry. Excerpts from the journal kept by Harry Lang in 1940 are given below; the original spelling and punctuation are preserved. Bracketed words are the ethnographer's.

Aug. 1.th 1940 Stay at Lower Post, yet.
Aug. 2.th 1940 Start from Lower Post
Aug. 3.th 1940 At [Joe] place. We camp.
Aug. 4.th 1940 Start camp at Frances River.
Aug. 5.th 1940 We get Home upper [Old Man] Creek.

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yardage at the head is then folded across the face. The shrouded body is laid on a blanket, a towel sometimes being used as a head rest. All the belongings of the deceased are removed from the death house to await distribution or destruction. When Old Lady Metla died at Old Man's place, her knees were found to be almost irremediably flexed from the fact that she had spent so many years kneeling and sitting on the ground at her work. After the body was shrouded, a packsack filled with clothing was placed across her knees in order to level them. When questioned as to why flexed knees were undesirable, Old Man explained they would require the construction of a larger coffin. [764] [768]

After the body has been washed and dressed it is left in the house or tent where death took place until the completion of the coffin. Some people may, in winter, keep a small fire burning near the body and also maintain a vigil candle. In general, however, the death place is avoided as much as possible and children are not permitted to play nearby.

Burial as soon after death as possible is the ideal and construction of a coffin is begun almost immediately. Several reasons are given for the desire to inter the deceased so quickly. In the first place, the removal of the spectacle of death relieves the bereavement of close kin. The evidence of death is also a reminder to others of their past losses and hence is depressing. Finally, the intense mourning of close kin, which is apt to be relieved by the final disposition of the corpse, is also depressing to neighbors. During the period that the deceased remains in the tent or cabin, the other occupants of the dwelling live with friends or erect a new residence.

Any other disposition of the corpse than burial in the ground is distasteful. A body should also be interred in a "nice place." "If they throw in the water," Edward Cross said, "No good. Purple can't go see graveyard."

The construction of the coffin is generally undertaken by a man who is recognized as being skilled in the task. He is assisted in the whipsawing and planing of the lumber, although in Lower Post readymade lumber is purchased. Before whipsawing begins, the measurement of the corpse is taken with a piece of string and considerable care is taken not to cut more boards than are required. If extra lumber remains after the completion of the coffin, somebody else in camp will die. The lumber is trimmed to make the foot portion of the coffin several inches narrower than the head (Plate 12, c). The scene of the construction of the "box," as the coffin is referred to, is not avoided. When the coffin and its cover are completed, their exterior surfaces are covered with a layer of any available material. This is tacked on the four exterior sides of the box, overlapping into the interior and along the bottom; it is also used to cover the exterior of the cover. When the draping of the coffin was observed in connection with Martha's burial, Paulette Donnelly helped her husband cut the material for his grandmother's coffin while that man and his brother-in-law tacked the goods in place (Plate 13, a). The finished coffin is transported to the place where the body is waiting. After the body has been placed in the box and the lid hammered into place, the coffin is transported to the burial ground. A small burial area is generally located close to each winter settlement, the few graves being marked by simple crosses on which individuals' names are sometimes crudely pencilled. Sometimes a fence is constructed around the graves, "So dogs don't come around" (Plate 13, b). Two large graveyards are located in Lower Post. These are maintained in an extremely poor condition, being thickly overgrown with aspen, [804]

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IDEATIONAL CULTURE

THE third major division of Kaska culture is built principally around the ideas and attitudes which the Indians direct toward the supernatural, natural, and social environments. These ideas, in many cases underlying behaviors described in the technical and social cultures, serve both adaptive and adjustive functions but in addition fulfill the important need of securing the individual's personal adjustment toward his known universe. Through these thought patterns the Indian strives to understand his experience.

In this division we will describe beliefs ranging from the fields of religion to natural history and human biology. We will discuss behaviors toward the supernatural environment and present activities illustrating the motivating role of other ideas. An attempt will also be made to understand the patterned, conscious and unconscious, thought and emotional processes of the people, and to outline the breakdown of rational control which occurs in some Indians when under the influence of alcohol or in mental disease.

NUMBERS AND MEASURES

Although the western system of numeration has been universally adopted in the Kaska area, few individuals are capable of extending such reckoning beyond one hundred. Arithmetical calculations are limited to simple mental addition and subtraction. No ritual or symbolic significance of numbers could be obtained.

The standard English system of weights and measures is in use, but the ability to understand these is not evenly developed. Most men have a fairly clear conception of mass measures, such as pounds, but a much more limited comprehension of length. When traveling along the crooked courses of rivers, Indians often refer to distance in terms of the number of points of land that must be rounded rather than the mileage that remains to be covered. There is keen interest in translating the distance between two known locales into miles but individual estimates are often widely at variance. White men are regarded as authoritative sources of such information, the ethnographer's maps being several times utilized in order to measure the distance from Lower Post to individuals' trap lines. Volume measures are also difficult for people to estimate, especially if a container is larger than five gallons.

In sewing the method of measurement is to compare the material to the span of the hand or the length of the arm. Rules, measuring rods, and squares are not used in carpentry or sewing.

Most Indians own clocks and pocket or wrist watches. These, however, are not primarily used to order time since most people are unable to read the dials and the measurement of time, like other measures, is only gradually being learned. Disagreement between time pieces is often considerable, especially in winter when, if a clock stops and there is no radio, the owner is only poorly able to guess at what hour to reset the instrument. The confusion resulting from Lower Post being on the boundary of two time zones is also partly responsible for the discrepancy between time pieces in summer. Individuals are not governed by time in the performance of customary activities.

By means of journals or by marking off the passage of days on a small calendar, an effort